

April 18, 2013

Dear Senators Honeyford and Nelson and Representatives Dunshee and Warnick:

We are writing to share our concerns for the different proposed funding amounts and approaches regarding Puget Sound's number one Capital Budget priority—the **Puget Sound Acquisition & Restoration** (PSAR) fund.

We appreciate your including PSAR in the Senate and House budgets, but have concerns with the insufficient funding levels to implement the science-based watershed plans developed by local communities. Projects were prioritized by a broad regional coalition of watershed representatives, including: local jurisdictions, non-profits, Tribes, environmental groups, business and agriculture, and state and federal agency representatives. We strongly support Governor Inslee's proposal to fully fund this regional priority at \$80 million, in contrast to the House proposal for PSAR at \$70 million and the Senate at \$60 million.

The proposed sources for funding PSAR in the Senate Budget include: Bonds, ASARCO Cleanup Settlement Account, and the new Environmental Legacy Stewardship Account (ELSA). Without specific changes in statute or budget language, neither the Cleanup Settlement Account nor the Environmental Legacy Stewardship Account appears to be appropriate fund sources. Furthermore, the Senate budget requires that PSAR funding come from the State Toxics Cleanup Account if ELSA is not created in statute and we are also concerned about whether this is an appropriate use of this account.

Furthermore, if the Senate funding level were adopted, **FIVE** of the most regionally significant prioritized projects would **NOT** be funded:

- **Lyre River Estuary Project** to acquire 253 acres of estuary and uplands to protect bluff-backed beaches and nearshore habitat. *(24th Legislative District, Clallam County—Sen. Hargrove, Rep. Van De Wege, Rep. Tharinger)* Project sponsor: North Olympic Land Trust
- **McKenna Reach Ranch Protection Project** to acquire and restore 250 acres and 1 mile of habitat on the Nisqually River. *(2nd Legislative District, Thurston County—Sen. Becker, Rep. Wilcox, Rep. Alexander)* Project sponsor: Nisqually Land Trust and Nisqually Indian Tribe
- **Kilisut Harbor Restoration Project** to restore tidal influence to salt marsh between Indian and Marrowstone islands, improving 1,750 feet of tidal channel and 100 acres. *(24th Legislative District, Hood Canal, Jefferson County—Sen. Hargrove, Rep. Van De Wege, Rep. Tharinger)* Project sponsor: North Olympic Salmon Coalition

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- **Little Fishtrap Estuary Acquisition** to acquire 73 acres of pocket estuary, nearshore and riparian habitat along the shoreline of Dana Passage. *(22nd Legislative District, Thurston County—Sen. Fraser, Rep. Hunt, Rep. Reykdal) Project sponsor: Capital Land Trust*
- **Upper Carlson Floodplain Reconnection Project** to restore natural river processes by removing 1,600 feet of levee and restoring 50 acres of floodplain. *(5th Legislative District, King County—Sen. Mullet, Rep. Rodne, Rep. Magendanz) Project sponsor: King County*

If the House funding level were adopted, the Kilisut Harbor Restoration Project would be partially funded and the Little Fishtrap Estuary Acquisition and Upper Carlson Floodplain Reconnection Project would **NOT** be funded.

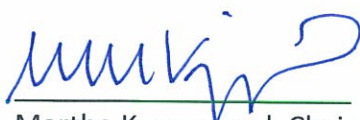
One of our region's top priorities is to increase the amount of available habitat to improve the health of Puget Sound. We must simultaneously restore degraded areas and prevent further loss of habitat either by strengthening regulations or using incentives, like purchasing land from willing sellers to protect the highest priority lands. Both are important tools that must be available for use by local implementers to maximize success. It is also important to emphasize that no state agencies will acquire any land through the PSAR investment priorities.

The acquisitions on the PSAR prioritized list meet two key objectives—support local project sponsors protecting the highest priority habitats where there is risk of conversion and existing regulations do not provide permanent protection; and, provide resources and incentives to purchase properties to make land available for high priority habitat restoration projects that would otherwise not be implemented.

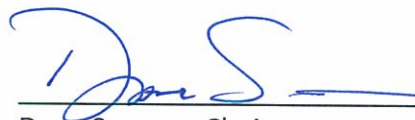
Finally, as the House, Senate, and Governor prepare to negotiate a final budget, we urge you to utilize the ranked list of agency decision packages as a guide to ensure consistency with the Action Agenda—the federally approved plan to restore the health of Puget Sound.

We all appreciate that you have tremendously difficult budget choices and we thank you for your continued leadership and bipartisan support for Puget Sound. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Martha Kongsgaard, Chair
Leadership Council



Dave Somers, Chair
Ecosystem Coordination Board



David Troutt, Chair
Salmon Recovery Council

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Enclosures

PSAR fact sheet:

http://www.psp.wa.gov/downloads/PSAR/PSAR_13-15_factsheet.pdf

PSAR prioritized project list:

http://www.psp.wa.gov/downloads/PSAR/psar_2013-2015_spreadsheet.pdf

Prioritized ranking of agency decision packages related to Puget Sound:

http://www.psp.wa.gov/downloads/legislative/Budget_Summary.pdf

cc: Senator Rodney Tom
Senator Tim Sheldon
Senator Andy Hill
Senator Ed Murray
Senator Karen Fraser
Senator Jim Hargrove
Representative Frank Chopp
Representative Pat Sullivan
Representative Richard DeBolt
Representative Joel Kretz
Representative J. T. Wilcox